

Session 5 Turning Green Wood



Introduction:

This last session is perhaps the most enjoyable and most fun, as we are now turning green wood and the students have by now developed some basic skills and need only a bit of encouragement or a reminder here and there concerning their turning techniques. Some of my students in the past have asked why we do the easiest turning in the last session. My response is that it only seems easier because you now have a good, solid foundation of skills to rely on. It is best to turn a simple bowl first and then, if there is time, show the students the techniques involved in turning a natural edge bowl. If time allows it would be a good idea to go over the collection, processing and preparation (chainsaw safety and skills) as well as, cutting logs to size, techniques for cutting logs in half, the coating of the end grain, etc. This can be done by actually showing them the process if time allows or by describing it and referring them to books such as *Turning Green Wood* by Michael O'Donnell or to videos such as Mike Mahoney's *From Tree to Table* and *Two Ways to Make a Bowl*. Be sure to discuss the rough turning and setting aside of bowl blanks along with some tips on drying, etc. It would be a good idea to discuss design and the variety of shapes for bowls. The size of the foot is determined by

whether it is an art piece where foot size is not critical or a functional bowl that would require a larger foot approximately 1/3 to 1/2 of the finished diameter. Do not forget to point out that the outer rim must be established early on and not worked on again once the bowl has been hollowed because it will be out of round and the likelihood of a bowl-destroying catch increases as the bowl is hollowed out and the rim begins to go oval.

Materials:

Face Shield Mandatory

Green bowl blank (As fresh cut as possible)
3/8" side ground Bowl Gouge
3/8" traditional ground Bowl Gouge optional
Parting tool
3/4" Round Nose Scraper
Point Tool (Pyramid Tool)

Practice Exercise:

A good practice exercise that I learned from Allan & Stuart Batty is to mount a 3" thick 5" diameter blank in a chuck and have the students waste away the blank practicing using the 3/8" side ground bowl gouge to turn the outside shape of a bowl. Then chuck up another blank the same size as before and have the students practice using the 3/8" side ground gouge to practice turning the inside of a bowl.

**Note: It is best to demonstrate how to turn bowls in steps, for instance demonstrate turning the outside of the bowl and the foot for mounting the blank in the chuck, then let the students go to work. The purpose of the demonstration is to teach the students the tool techniques used for turning the outside of a bowl. Once they have turned the outside of the bowl then show them how to mount the blank in the chuck and then turn out the inside of the bowl. Remember to keep the demonstrations brief and just show enough of the cuts for the students to be able to turn the outside and inside of the bowl.*

Demonstration:

1. Either demonstrate or discuss how the bowl blank was taken from the log to the point where it can be mounted on the lathe.

** Note: If turning a natural edge bowl it is sometimes easier and more effective to use a 1" or larger Forstner bit to drill through the bark down to stable wood in order to mount the two prong drive center for between centers turning.*

2. Find the center and rough cut the blank to a circle on the band saw. Be sure to discuss band saw safety procedures while rounding the blank

3. Mount the bowl blank in a screw chuck or between centers using a two prong drive center that is in direct contact with the wood after the bark has been removed from the area where the two prong center will be pounded into the center of the blank..

4. Rough turn the blank and prepare a foot for mounting in the chuck

5. Go over turning techniques, pointing the bevel in the direction of the cut and using the bevel as a guide to support the cutting edge as it glides along the surface of the wood in the direction of the cut so as to minimize the vibration caused by pushing too hard into the work piece.

Now let the students go to work rough turning their bowl blanks.

6. Remove roughed out blank and mount in chuck for turning out the inside of the bowl.

7. Once again go over the proper turning techniques.

8. Finish hollowing bowl or enough of bowl for the students to get the idea of how it is done and let them get back to work on their bowls.

9. Finish inside of bowl.

10. Discuss or demonstrate a variety of ways to reverse turn the bowl in order to finish the back side and finish turning the foot.

11. Reverse turn the bowl and, if possible, show how the three point tool can be used to add a bit of detail or to highlight some feature on the foot.

12. Remove the finished bowl from the lathe and discuss some of the various finishes that can be used to make the bowl food safe or that would provide a gallery quality finish.

Project:

Turning a Green Bowl

1. Refer to handout in project section of manual titled “*Bowl Turning Fundamentals*” the handout on “*Tool Techniques for Turning Platters & Bowls*”



References:

Books:

Turning Green Wood by Micheal O'Donnell

The Art Of Turned Bowls by Richard Raffan

Turning Wood (revised) by Richard Ruffian

DVD's and Videos:

Bowl Basics by Mike Mahoney

Decorative Utility Bowls by Trent Bosch

Vessels of Illusion by Trent Bosch

Turn It On Video Series with Jimmy Clewes

Mastering Wood turning: Bowl Turning Techniques with Glenn Lucas